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BULLETIN

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The BULLETIN seeks out articles on important issues of interest to its readers. We are confident that you will find the following article on Film-making and the Archives stimulating and provocative. Readers comments and contributions are welcome.

Film-Making And The Film Archives

The pages of the Canadian Film Institute's "Bulletin", of Hye Bossin's "Canadian Film Weekly", of the C.A.A.E.'s "Food for Thought", and of many other publications, have over the years given much play to the cause of a Canadian Film Archives. The Institute's invitation to contribute yet another article to this well-worn topic therefore seemed at first rather pointless: despite earnest lobbying by its Archives Committee, despite impressive-sounding motions occasionally passed by public-spirited organisations, despite the constant erosion and loss of film, the creation of a suitable Archives in Canada remains a utopic dream.

Official apathy, of course, is only partly to blame. Experience has shown in other countries that lack of support from high quarters does not necessarily prevent film archives from being formed: the French Cinémathèque, which began in Henri Langlois' private residence (he even kept film in his bathtub) and which has never been looked upon with great favour by the French Government even after the latter grudgingly agreed to give some form of tangible subsidy, is eloquent testimony to the fact that a true film archivist allows nothing to stop him from achieving his goal. Indeed, there are a number of archives today which depend almost entirely on private support, or which started that way and struggled for many years without the blessing of officialdom.

But official apathy in Canada has doubtless been a factor in hindering what should have been a natural outgrowth of our cultural development. Neither the film industry nor the Canadian Government can be proud of the role they have so far played in the affair. Of the two, the industry's attitude has been made clearest: our country's distributors and exhibitors have troubles enough of their own in keeping ahead of television without sinking unnecessary pennies, let alone dollars, into what has always been for them a remote cultural cause. It is only recently, for example, that the mighty "Academy" in Hollywood has paid much attention to the preservation of the films on which they spend so much money each year by giving their "Oscars". The first Canadian Archives Committee did have important representatives from our film trade: that nothing came of this committee rather clearly indicates that the trade's financial surplus —such as it is—is sorely needed elsewhere.

The Government's apathy is harder to explain; and, once explained, even harder to understand. Financial considerations would not appear to be, in this case, an impossible obstacle. For the coming fiscal year, our Government proposes to spend more than four and a half million dollars for the production and distribution of documentary and public information films. Few could argue that every penny of this sum is not well-spent: our National Film Board is now a unique institution in the world, and its fame and stature grow year by year. The creation of the Canada Council, also, is testimony enough that official concern for the arts in Canada is a reality. Finally, the continued activities of the Public Archives might lead the casual observer to infer that the philosophy of those who believe that the past must be understood before the future can be perceived, would find sympathetic ears in high circles.

Yet, film preservation - in these circles - has apparently been given a shamefully restricted definition: the preservation of historical footage of Canadian content, mostly of newsreel origin, suitable for film production purposes in retrospective or biographical film essays. It may be that this eminently practical and laudatory aim appeals to the administrator through whose hands all projects must pass before they reach the very top. It may be, too, that the creation of a stock-shot library for film-makers is genuinely felt to be of such urgency that other considerations must await their turn in the official ladder of priorities. Yet the facts are there: for the past five years, talk of a real Film Archives has bounced from one Government department to another, like an unwanted child in search of a home.

What is the position of the film-maker in this imbroglio? Tradition has it in Canada that a film-maker is meant to speak through his films, and that any other form of communication is inappropriate. Indeed, Canadian producers and directors have not been prone to

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A dramatic incident in the early 'Canadian' feature film, "The Viking", a print of which was found in a Newfoundland fish house. (Photo courtesy of Natonal Film Archive, London, England).

Film Making and the Film Archives *(contd.)*

wield the pen in the defence of their artistic interests, and the cause of the film archives is but one vital question about which they have remained silent. John Grierson was first, and very nearly last, of our prominent film personalities to speak his mind in more than pleasant, prudent, careful generalities: he had come from a country where film-making such as Basil Wright, Paul Rotha and Allberto Calvalcanti had learnt that the defence of Cinema through words was an indissoluble corollary to the making of Cinema through motion pictures. The present shoddy state of film criticism in our country is partly due to the retience of the film-maker to stand up in public for the values by which he lives and creates.

If the film-maker's silence is to be deplored, it nevertheless remains true that he is one of those who would have the most to gain from the establishment of a Canadian Film Archives. The study of the past is not the prerogative of the historian alone. Any artistic discipline lives by the richness of its past, and maturity in an artist implies the assimilation, and personal transformation, of the cultural heritage that has preceded him.

Two post-war developments in European cinema attest to this. In England, whose film-making threatens to sink permanently in mediocrity, a small group of film-makers have lately been injecting a new, provocative spirit. Their movement is referred to as "The Free Cinema" film-makers? Their names: Lindsay Anderson, restricted to the short and experimental film. Although their influence on feature film production has not yet been fully felt, their achievements have given English producers much food for thought. Who are the "Free Cinema" film-makers? Their names: Linday Anderson, Karel Reisz, Tony Richardson, Walter Lassally, John Fletcher. Their education: the National Film Theatre, London where the great classics are regularly shown, thanks to the National Film Archives. Some of them began as critics: Anderson first edited "Sequence", a magazine of film criticism; he also wrote a book and innumerable articles about film. Reisz worked in the British Film Institute. Richardson wrote film and theatre reviews. They studied film in the B.F.I. Library, and all helped to make "Sight and Sound" the fine fim magazine it is today.

The French film industry has never allowed itself to become as artistically stale as the British, but it has had its ups and downs. One such down began about ten years ago, when the great directors of the 1930's and 1940's, men like Clair, Becker, Duvivier, Carné, began to tire a little, and in some cases, give up the artistic struggle. Their films, which once had given stature to the French industry, now were somehow removed from the realities of French life in the 1950's. A new movement was needed, and it has burst upon the scene under the name of "La nouvelle vague" (the words were invented by journalists, but the reality of the movement was not). What has the "nouvelle vague" accomplished? Last year, its feature films won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, as well as the Best Director Prize, and the International Critic's Prize. The very first films of the movement have thus won for France international critical recognition. For their producers, the films have been money-winners. They are revitalizing not only the art, but the business, of film-making.

Who are the "Nouvelle vague"? Their names: Alain Resnais, Claude Chabrol, François Truffaut, Marcel Camus, Alexandre Astruc, and many others. Their education: l'I.D.H.E.C. (Resnais), "Les Cahiers du Cinéma" (Truffaut, Chabrol, Doniol-Valcroze, etc.), la Cinémathèque Française (all). These are mostly young men. Like their English colleagues, they have studied film, they have seen film, sitting out both performances, every night, at the Cinémathèque. They have written provocatively, often infuriatingly, about film. And they still do, now that they are film directors, between shots on the stage of the Boulogne Studios. All are unanimous in crediting the Cinémathèque Française as a major influence in their artistic, individual development.

Film Archives such as the National Film Archives and the Cinémathèque Française have therefore played their part in the formation of new directions in film-making, by keeping and showing the films of the past, by giving an open screen to everything which forms part of world film.

In this context, the work of the Film Societies in Canada has its importance. But Film Societies are mostly groups of culturally-minded people who wish to see a dozen or so good films each year. They import films because there is no other way to satisfy the demands of their members. They cannot replace a Film Archives, as their activities cannot be centered around the permanent acquisition of good cinema for study purposes.

What, then, would a Canadian Film Archives accomplish which existing organizations cannot? It would primarily become a place where films are stored permanently, regardless of the vicissitudes of commercial distribution contracts. The International Federation of Film Archives has formulated the rules under which films may be obtained: by agreement with most film producers, copies of great films of the past can be acquired, either by donation of a print, or by the payment of laboratory costs, as long as the use of the film in no way conflicts with financial interests of the producer.

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FROM FILM ASSOCIATES OF CALIFORNIA

These films are available for free preview with a view to purchase

FARMER DON AND THE CITY

10 min. col. $110.00 b & w $60.00

Shows relationship between the farmer and the city. All of us depend upon the farmer to grow the food we eat. The farmer depends upon the people in the city to supply him with many of the things he needs. The farmer sells his crop in the city and spends his money there, giving work to city people. (for community studies and social studies classes).

WHAT'S INSIDE THE EARTH?

13 min. col. $135.00 b & w $70.00

Explores the interior of the earth, indicating and illustrating the methods men use to determine the earth's structure. Provides an exciting and interest-provoking introduction to the earth sciences. (For elementary and junior high school classes).

NEW ACQUISITIONS IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY COLLECTION

"FETES GALANTES

Argos Films Presentation—15 mins. b & w — free

A. Dauman & Philip Lifchitz

A pictorial review of Antoine Watteau's most famous masterpieces. Jean-Antoine Watteau - 1684 to 1721 - member of the French Academy, exercised a profound and lasting influence on French art. As an artist he excelled in his imaginative portrayal of the French Academy, exercised a profound and lasting influence on French art. As an artist he excelled in his imaginative portrayal of scenes from Italian comedy, elegant party groups, "fêtes champêtres". In this film, whose title is based on the major theme of Watteau's works, Watteau's famous masterpieces are brillantly brought to life. There is an excellent blending of pictures and the background music and commentary - read by Gerard Philipe - are excellent.
French language version only.

CORRELIEU

National Film Board 20 mins — colour — free.

A film on the life and works of Ozias Leduc, Canadian painter, who became almost a legend in the Quebec countryside where he lived for nearly a century.

From "Correlieu", Leduc's own name for his home in picturesque Mont St. Hilaire 20 miles from the roar and bustle of Montreal, the artist travelled up and down his native province to execute what he called "decorations" for cathedrals and churches. Some of these large paintings, of which he did over one hundred and fifty, show Leduc's consciousness of the turbulent modern schools that came and went over the years. But always the artist returned to the quiet inspiration of nature, so evident in the work shown in CORRELIEU.
French and English versions

A Badger's Bad Day

GROVER-JENNINGS PRODUCTIONS

A BADGER'S BAD DAY

Color 11½ min. $115.00 Price includes a 35mm colour filmstrip and a set of black and white 8x10 study prints.

In this wild animal story, the badger makes the mistake of hunting near the hollow log where the skunk family lives—and he gets sprayed with the terrible scent. From then on the badger can't smell. Badger and all the other animals are confused by the skunk odor. The film emphasizes the highly developed sense of smell in animals over the other senses and nature's plan and control of reproduction in her "animal eat animal" world.

FOREST BABIES

Color 11½ min. $115.00 Price includes a 35mm colour filmstrip and a set of black and white 3x10 study prints.

A story of wild animals in their natural habitat. The film traces the growth and development of a number of baby animals in the first few weeks of early Summer, showing the comparisons in growth and learning. We see the natural camouflage of some animals and other ways in which animals adapt themselves for protection against their natural enemies. The simplicity of presentation both on the screen and in the script is the outstanding virtue of this excellent film. 'Recommended for children from kindergarten through upper elementary grades.'

GOD'S MONKEY

Pacific Pictures 13 mins — colour — free

Explains the triptych "The Garden of Delights", painted by Hieronymus Bosch. The first panel shows the Garden of Eden before the fall of man. The second reveals the sensuous and alluring pleasures of the flesh, and the third depicts the weird gaseous mists of hell where man must face his furies in expiation. "One of a pair of wondrously tasteful and rewarding art films, produced in Spain . . . a striking, fluent close-up . . . and a poetical commentary by Hugh Chisholm that towers above all else."

New York Times

MORE NEWS ABOUT THE FESTIVALS

Stratford Festival authorities have announced that the Stratford International Film Festival will be held in the Avon Theatre during the two weeks commencing August 22nd. As in earlier seasons, important new motion pictures from many different countries will be shown.

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12th International Film Festival at Karlovy Vary, Czechoslovakia will take place between July 8th and 24th. Among the categories for which prizes will be awarded are documentary, popular science, puppet and cartoon.

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According to latest figures, there are 19,136 film society members in Canada who are members of societies affiliated with the Canadian Federation of Film Societies, a division of the Canadian Film Institute. Tentative figures show that in Toronto there are 3,506, in Montreal 2,657 and in Ottawa 1,920 members. An article in a later issue of the BULLETIN will examine this dramatic growth in the film society movement.

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A four-man crew from Crawley Films is spending the month of February shooting a colour film on the Caribbean Open Invitational Golf Tournaments for the House of Seagram. They will spend one week each in Panama, Venezuela, Puerto Rico and Jamaica.

The crew is made up of Producer F. R. Crawley, writer Judith Crawley, cameraman Stanley Brede and Crawley's Director of Music, William McCauley.

Film-making and the Film Archives (concluded).

In England, France, and many other countries, this is interpreted as meaning that the films may be shown at intervals to restricted audiences of people professionally or culturally concerned with the cinema, without the payment of the usual royalty fees. This definition does not include Film Societies (although some producers may tolerate this as well). In Canada, one of the prime purposes of a Film Archives could be frequent showings in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and possibly Vancouver, i. e. in cultural centres where the study of film can be an influence on film production and film criticism.

Let this article therefore, be a plea by the film-maker for a Canadian Film Archives. Not merely an archives of old stock-shots for which he may one day be grateful as a producer, but from which he will never learn to grow as an artist. Give him a living Archives, whose screen brings the old and the new, not once, but every year, permanently. A library, if you wish; a museum, if you prefer the term. But give him the food from which he will learn to see the world, through his own eyes, as others have, before him.

(The author of this article is a film-maker. He has asked us for permission to remain anonymous—Ed.)

HOLLYWOOD'S NEW MOTION PICTURE MUSEUM

". . . the County of Los Angeles has created by Ordinance a Motion Picture and Television Museum which may in some respects follow the early path of your own Institute. We will have Archives for motion pictures of historic importance. We hope through the founding of this department to arrange for the interchanging of pictures and cooperate not only in this field but in other fields.

The organization of the Hollywood Motion Picture and Television Museum has the endorsement of the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Motion Picture Producers Association, the Actors, Directors and Writers Guilds, Labor, and also includes eminent individuals drawn from other contemporaneous industries.

Our effort is intended to be in the interests of the present and future motion picture and television industries on a world-wide basis. While there is no long history to the television industry, they are making history throughout the world." (from a letter to Charles Topshee from Sol Lesser, Chairman of the Hollywood Motion Picture and Television Museum Commission.)

The Museum commission favour a four and three-quarter acre site at the Hollywood Bowl for the Museum building. The commission has unanimously agreed that the project must be of sufficient proportions to include a building with a sound stage where an actual movie filming may be viewed by a sizeable audience (2,000 or 3,000) from behind a glas partition. A report in The Citizen-News states that the commission is determined to include the sound stage project since this is what 90% of the 4 1/2 million visitors each year want to see.

Permanent exhibitions of important equipment, momentos, miniature stages and various other movie and television devices will be on view in regular museum type presentations, dressed up undoubtedly by Hollywood know-how. Books, scripts, documents, too will be treated to their proper respect.

A related project of the museum, establishment of a proper place to store and safeguard important documentary and feature films of the industry, will also be granted office area in the museum with the vaults to be located, probably, elsewhere.

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NATIONAL FILM BOARD ARCHIVE PROGRAM

As reported by Dorothy Macpherson in the CFI BULLETIN eleven months ago, the Canadian Government has provided a special allotment of funds to the National Film Board for screening and selecting, cataloguing and storing what is to be kept of the sixty million feet of motion picture film now held by the National Film Board.

Since then the Board has been especially diligent in its efforts to classify wartime footage in preparation for an important television series about Canada's role in the second world war. In addition it has been examining and classifying films held for the National Museum which includes some valuable historical footage.